

# IDENTIFYING ENDANGERED HISTORIC SITES IN GRAND COUNTY

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## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Like all of Colorado's mountain counties, Grand County has experienced rampant development over the past few decades. Driven by the county's tourist and real estate industry, along with last year's East Troublesome fire, such growth has endangered many of its historic sites and natural landscapes, all of which define Grand County's rural character and environmental condition.

This project identifies endangered historic sites within Grand County based upon the National Trust for Historic Preservation's general guidelines in identifying the location, history, and threat each site faces. Working within Colorado State University History Department's Digital Hub, the project's deliverable will be an interactive map with 25 endangered sites and spatial layers that identify conservation easements, federal and state lands, and town boundaries. The connections between the conservation easements and endangered historic sites will assist the Grand County Historical Association (GCHA) in its work preserving the county's historical landscapes and sites. Doing so, will help guide conversations over how to balance Grand County's economic and community development with its natural resources and historic landscapes in a sustainable manner.

## INTERNSHIP GOALS

- 1) Meet with variety of different community members in Grand County to seek their input on important historic sites they'd like mapped
- 2) Engage in site visits and collect spatial data
- 3) Conduct additional archival research on historic sites and the County overall
- 4) Use the History digital hub to map the historic sites on the final deliverable product for GCHA
- 5) Present the final map to the GCHA Board Members

## HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

- Engaged in **community development** by seeking input about historic sites from community members, ranging from close friends to mentors. Seeking community input is an integral part of practicing public history.
- Honed digital history skills by collecting spatial data and mapping historic sites
- Learned more about historic preservation through archival research and writing site condition categories

## WHAT YOU DID – COMMUNITY HISTORY

**Community History** – Doing community history requires **collaboration** between researchers and community members to collect and preserve the stories of local communities. Community history uses oral history techniques and shared authority models to collect historical information about individuals, families, important events, and everyday life.

### Fieldwork

- Took photographs of all visited sites
- Collected spatial data
- Met with: local ranchers, artists, county board of commissioner members, GCHA board members, president of Colorado Headwaters Land Trust, retired Grand County Judge, and museum volunteers from the Heritage Park Museum, Cozens Ranch Museum, and Pioneer Village Museum

### Digital Mapping

- Identified 25 historic sites and interpreted their condition
- Deployed spatial layers to identify relationships between public and private land

### Archival Research

- Consulted county histories, Colorado newspaper digital collections, and federal websites to research historic sites and frame them within the county's history

### Historical Interpretation

- Wrote 4 tertiary narratives for submission to the Colorado Encyclopedia

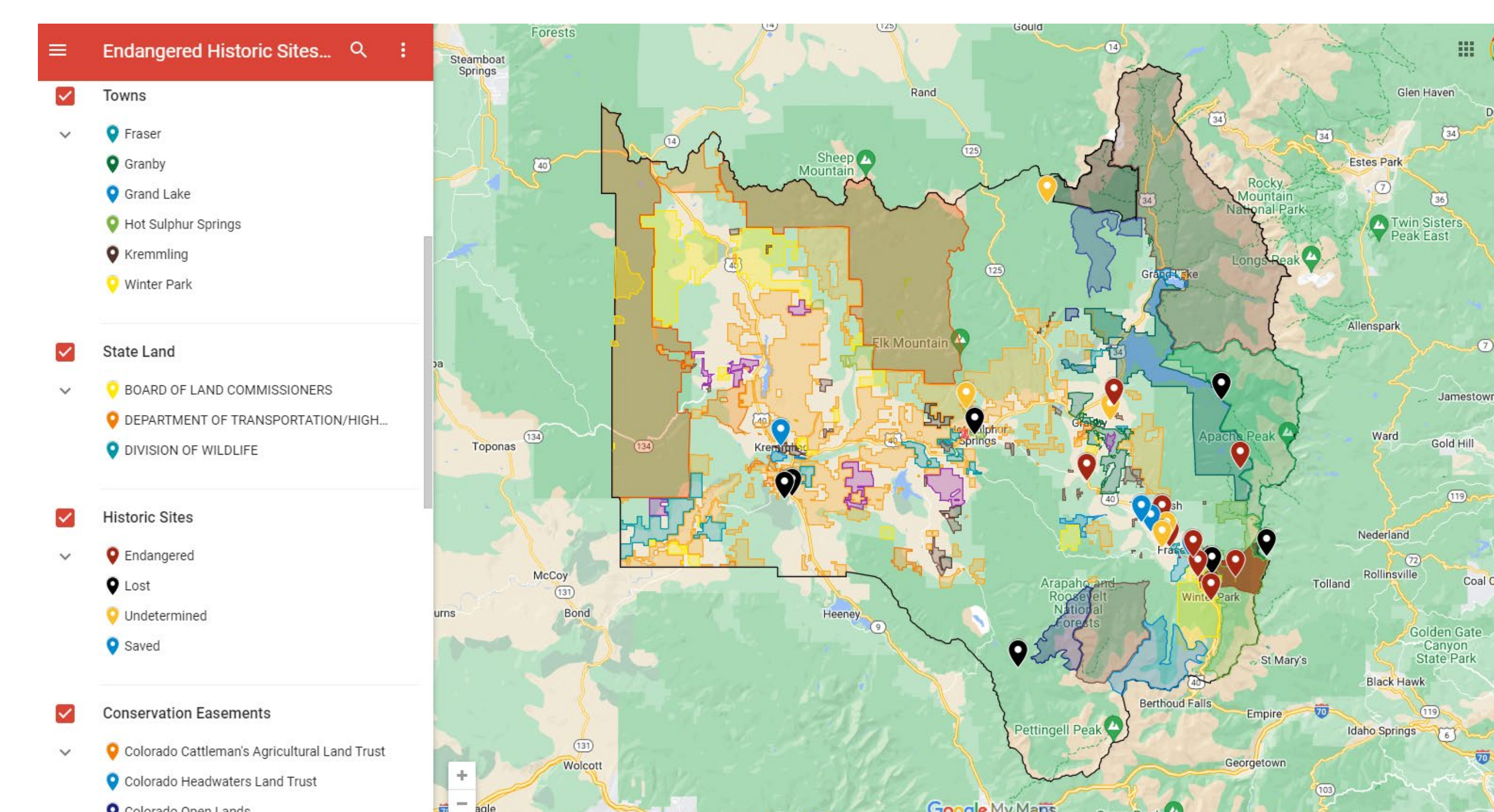
### Historic Preservation

- Wrote site condition categories based on framework made by state historic preservation office and national register of historic places



## WHAT YOU LEARNED

- Used digital tools to conduct historical research – strengthened digital history knowledge by creating a spatially interpretive frame where historical narratives marry spatial data
- Strengthened historical interpretation skills – Engaged in interpretive history through tertiary writing, which is writing historical synthesis for public audiences that showcases the significance of the subject matter.
- Deployed spatial layers in meaningful ways – Rendered the relationships between a variety of land ownership boundaries, like public and private land, conservation easements and town boundaries, and historic sites in relation to all spatial layers.
- Strengthened academic research skills through less structured avenues, like conducting informal interviews with community members
- Accelerated the learning process by producing a product for a real-world client that needed collaboration for success



## NEXT STEPS

- Since the digital map is buildable, the GCHA will add more sites as their preservation work continues
- Present the map and project to the GCHA Board
- Write several more site narratives for submission to the Colorado Encyclopedia